

SITUATION REPORT NO. 2
INCIDENT NO. 98-001 (Devils Lake Flooding --Continuation of 97-001)
DATE: April 28, 1998 TIME: 3:00 p.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Devils Lake Basin flooding.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGES: Benson County officials report they face financial hardships as Devils Lake continues its historic rise. The past five years of flooding have depleted resources, including money for road repairs. During this time, the County Highway staff has been unable to implement its maintenance program because its efforts have been directed toward disaster road repair work. With the current spring runoff, several roads have been damaged. Culvert ends have been washed out, undermining the integrity of roads, and deep rutting is occurring on the extremely soft roadways. Road damage is occurring on township roads, as well as county roads. One county bridge is under water, another has water up to the deck, and a third is threatened by flood waters. These bridges are along the Mauvais Coulee and run adjacent to N.D. Highway 281.

Benson County closed the Woods-Rutten Road on April 13 after water began flowing over the road. This road was used last year as an alternate route for flooded portions of N.D. Highways 20 and 57. If Devils Lake rises to 1,445.5 feet, Woods-Rutten Road will be under one foot of water.

At least 15 homes on the east side of N.D. Highway 281 in Benson County are threatened by flood waters. One home along the shore of Devils Lake presently has 10 inches of water in the basement. City of Minnewaukan residents have also expressed their concerns about flood damages if Devils Lake reaches its predicted crest. Minnewaukan officials have conducted several meetings concerning solutions to problems posed by a coulee that encircles the city and a rising Devils Lake.

Throughout the Devils Lake Basin, FAS road damages and agricultural damages, which also includes tillable land, are increasing as Devils Lake rises. More farmers, ranchers and homeowners are forced to leave their homes and farms as the lake consumes their land and buildings.

Ramsey County officials are also concerned about financing repairs for 1998 flood damages. Like Benson County, funds for road repairs have been depleted by five consecutive years of flooding.

Lake Irving is only 2.5 feet above the 1,444 foot elevation of Devils Lake compared to its average of 14 feet. As a result, water is spreading out and moving swiftly.

The State Water Commission staff estimates that a one-foot overflow of water from Devils Lake would cause a 10-foot rise in Stump Lake. The Nelson County lake covers 7,000 acres in surface area and contains more than 84,000 acre-feet of water.

Several township roads have soft spots, but townships don't have money to repair them. Nelson County Road 22, a major north-south route, has four soft spots. A county road crew will blade the road.

Outreach workers for the Spirit of the Plains Project have noticed an increase in the number of farms that are being auctioned off in the Devils Lake area. The N.D. Department of Human Services' crisis counseling program also reported that many farmers are "credit card" farming because their financial resources have been depleted. North central area farmers enrolled in the North Dakota Farm Business Management Education Program experienced a 34 percent drop in income between

1996 and 1997, according to a report from the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Service.

4. **RESOURCES:**

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. **VOLUNTEER ACTION:** No change from previous reports.

6. **MAJOR ACTIONS:** A State Flood Coordination Center meeting was held in Devils Lake on April 16, 1998. Following is a summary of information reported during that meeting.

North Dakota Emergency Management

The N.D. Civil Air Patrol provided a surveillance flight of the Devils Lake Basin on April 15. Participants included representatives of the N.D. State Water Commission, N.D. Emergency Management, Ramsey, Nelson and Benson Counties, and Spirit Lake Nation.

N.D. State Water Commission

When the Available Storage Acreage Program (ASAP) started in 1996, approximately 8,000 acre-feet of Devils Lake Basin flood waters were stored on surrounding land. In 1997, the program was expanded, and 13,000 acres were used to store 22,000 acre-feet of water. This year, the program will likely store approximately 21,000 acre-feet of water. Of this amount, approximately 20,000 acre-feet will be stored on land already enrolled in ASAP with the remaining 1,000 acre-feet stored on newly enrolled sites. Of the \$1.15 million allocated to the program for 1998, approximately \$1.1 million will be used to renew 1997 ASAP contracts and \$50,000 will be used for new water storage sites.

Technical data and draft maps for the Devils Lake Basin have been sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Washington D.C. office. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) developed the maps and data under a contract with FEMA. This information has been given by FEMA to its technical contractor, Michael Baker Jr., Inc., to develop a preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). FEMA is deliberating how to map the flood zones around the lake. Devils Lake is an inland lake without an outlet and currently the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) does not have zones to adequately map the hazard. Wind and ice-affected conditions, hazards that complicate the 100-year flood elevation of 1,445.3 feet, make the mapping process difficult. The preliminary FIRM may be issued this year.

State and local officials are pursuing an NFIP waiver with FEMA officials for 1998 similar to those granted previously. Waivers of requirements had been issued in 1996 and 1997 for Devils Lake area policyholders. Those waivers changed key language in the flood insurance contract concerning a 90-day waiting period in adjusting damage from a continuous flooding lake, determination of total loss, and determining definition of what constitutes a shoreline structure.

The cities of Churchs Ferry and Minnewaukan are scheduled to be converted on May 4 from emergency phase to the regular phase of NFIP. Spirit Lake Nation is also in the process of converting to the regular phase. The emergency phase has lower flood insurance coverage limits than the regular phase.

North Central Planning Council

All funding had been allocated for the Urgent Needs Temporary Diking Program. The North Central Planning Council had approximately \$8,000 available in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money for the program.

Efforts to connect the city of Crary to Ramsey County Rural Utilities have required the project contractor to work in a wetland area. Work has temporarily been suspended until the ground in that area has dried. The Planning Council obtained \$120,000 in CDBG money and supplemental grant funding for the project.

Bids have been awarded for a project to connect the Cliffs Subdivision to Ramsey County Rural Utilities. The \$22,000 project has been funded through supplemental CDBG funds.

Proposals for the Ramsey County Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed in early May. This plan will address such issues as planning for Devils Lake level increases or decreases, prioritizing roads that will be reclaimed and conducting and addressing land uses for areas around the city of Devils Lake levees.

The Planning Council has applied for \$30,000 in supplemental CDBG funds for temporary diking work in Minnewaukan and in Benson County. The funds require a one-third match, which could be in the form of materials or equipment.

N.D. Department of Transportation

Bids for the N.D. Highway 57 grade raise project at the Narrows were opened April 17. The project calls for elevating the road to 1,456.6 feet and the bridge to 1,462.5 feet. Staff at the N.D. Department of Transportation (DOT) expect a review of the contract to be completed this week. If the contractor is prepared to begin work immediately, there could be construction activity on the project by the end of April or early May.

Spirit Lake Nation leaders have determined no tribal tax for the N.D. Highway 57 grade raise project will be levied.

Because of hauling requirements for the N.D. Highway 57 project, the N.D. Highway 20 Narrows crossing will not be surfaced this year. This segment, as well as the segment on Mission Bay, will have a light asphalt surface that is waterproof. The N.D. Highway 57 contractor will be responsible for maintaining these surfaces once hauling commences. Every reasonable effort will be made to keep this road in acceptable driving condition for the general public. With the recent closure of the Wood-Rutten Road crossing, it is increasingly critical that N.D. Highway 20 be kept open to general traffic. Even though there will be some travel delays on N.D. Highway 20 due to the heavy truck traffic, DOT staff believes that the highway can be kept open through the construction season.

Work is expected to begin soon in completing the holdover grade raise projects from 1997. Contractors have been contacting the Devils Lake District Office about beginning work. DOT staff has delayed work to ensure that the frost is out of the grades. Any soft spots that develop will then be identified and repaired.

Plans are being prepared to add rip-rap to some grade raises to allow for the higher lake elevation expected for this year. The preventive measure will help keep road shoulders from being washed out by Devils Lake flood waters.

Plans are being prepared regarding building a new bridge at the south Mauvais Coulee crossing on U.S. Highway 281. If the lake rises to its predicted crest of 1,445.5 feet or higher, this emergency project will be let and work will begin on an emergency basis. DOT presently does not have any emergency funding (federal) arranged for this work.

Plans have been prepared, and a contractor has been alerted, for emergency diking along U.S. Highway 2 near Churchs Ferry. If the Mauvais Coulee should rise as high as in 1997, this work will be initiated without delay, in order to keep U.S. Highway 2 open to traffic.

A surfacing project for grade raises on U.S. Highway 281, both south and north of Minnewaukan, will be let in May. These projects should be fully surfaced and in good driving condition by fall. Surfacing projects for N.D. Highway 19 and portions of N.D. Highway 20 are scheduled for June, and should go forward as scheduled unless weather conditions cause the lake to rise even higher than currently predicted.

Water is flowing over U.S. Highway 281 at a large slough west of Fort Totten. Currently, the area is signed for a reduced speed limit. Plans are currently being prepared at the District Office for a possible emergency grade raise here. The District is also compiling a list of other sites where water is high enough to cause problems for Devils Lake area highways. Grade raises at some of these sites may eventually be necessary this year if wet conditions prevail.

N.D. National Guard

A contractor has started work to abandon the sewer lagoon at Camp Gilbert C. Grafton. The project includes connecting the camp to Ramsey County Rural Utilities' sewer system. The sewer line will allow the camp to discharge directly into the sewer system and abandon the lagoon, which is threatened by rising Devils Lake flood waters. The project is scheduled for completion by June 12.

N.D. State Parks and Recreation Department

The rising lake level is having the following impacts on the facilities in Devils Lake State Parks.

Shelvers Grove

The Devils Lake level is threatening two areas of road in the day use area. Parks and Recreation staff will relocate or raise the road in these areas. The lake is about 1.1 feet from flooding the shop facility. Construction plans are being finalized for raising a short section of the campground entrance road and relocating the office septic drain field.

Grahams Island

Parks and Recreation staff is awaiting approval of an NFIP claim for moving the east comfort station. The harbor lift station is threatened, and Parks and Recreation is in the process of planning for raising this facility. An engineer is developing construction plans for relocation of the boat ramp. Parks and Recreation is also planning on installing a temporary ramp for use until the permanent ramp has been completed. Pending concurrence with the facility relocation plan from North Dakota Emergency Management and FEMA, Parks and Recreation will begin relocating the campground facilities this summer.

Shoreline debris is becoming a problem for this area. The winds have already deposited a large amount of debris on the new shoreline in the park. Park staff is currently developing strategies for dealing with this problem.

Black Tiger Bay

Recent damages to the Woods-Rutten Road will present access problems for visitors who enter this area from the north. No problems are anticipated at the boat ramp site this year other than occasional erosion from high winds.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Wanzek Construction is continuing its work on Stage One of efforts to elevate the lake level protection system for the city of Devils Lake. Crews are adding an interior drainage pump along Creel Bay. The Creel Bay pump station building is near completion. Stage 1A of the project includes the western and Creel Bay areas, while Stage 2 includes the eastern portions of the city of Devils Lake. Under both stages, the levees are raised to approximately 1,450 feet.

Bid specifications for Stage 1A and 2A call for elevating the city of Devils Lake's levee system to 1,452 feet. The bid specifications will also ask contractors to estimate the costs of raising the levee an additional two feet with rock to 1,454 feet and using earthwork to elevate the levee to 1,457 feet. Funding has not yet been secured for these two options. A bid opening for Stage 1A has been tentatively scheduled for May 21, while a bid opening for Stage 2A has been delayed until May 6. Bids for both stages cannot be opened until an amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement has been signed by officials for the USACE and city of Devils Lake and has been approved at the national level.

The USACE has awarded bids for Stage Two of efforts to repair and reroute flood-threatened sewer lines owned by Ramsey County Rural Utilities. Black Construction is scheduled to start relocating sewer lines in the Lakewood area. Olson Engineering is developing a plan to relocate an eight-inch gravity line in the Cove Resort area along the west side of Creel Bay. Recent easterly winds have caused erosion, which may soon undermine the existing sewer line serving approximately 30 homes and the Cove Resort. The North Central Planning Council received \$600,000 from the USACE and \$313,000 in CDBG funds for the project.

Nelson County Emergency Management

About 60 residents participated in an information meeting at Tolna on April 27 regarding future

potential changes in the level of Stump Lake. The meeting was sponsored by Nelson County Emergency Management and the Nelson County Board of Commissioners. Officials for the N.D. State Water Commission provided a short presentation on lake level probabilities. Also discussed were ideas on what planning could be pursued to deal with anticipated rises in Stump Lake. Suggestions included identifying impacts, road prioritization, getting all communities to participate in the NFIP and partnering with adjacent local governments and water groups to review potential methods to reduce hardships.

Nelson County has issued an emergency declaration because of agricultural lands that have been impacted by sheet water, the rising lake elevation of Lake Loretta that has contributed to the high ground water table in the city of Michigan area, and the anticipated overflow of Devils Lake into Stump Lake.

The Nelson County Commission has requested that the USACE conduct an urban impact study of the long-term effects on the city of Tolna and Tolna Dam should Devils Lake overflow into Stump Lake.

The city of Michigan has also issued an emergency declaration because of a rising Lake Loretta. The lake is presently at 1,508.8 feet, almost three feet higher than the city of Michigan sewer system. The sewer system is stressed as main sewer lines are filled with ground water. The lake is anticipated to rise to 1,509 feet within the next few weeks. The city reapplied for a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant to support the dewatering of Lake Loretta and the McHugh slough area. The County Commission has provided support for this project by pledging \$15,000 for costs and 5 percent of future pumping expenses.

Ramsey County Emergency Management

The Ramsey County Highway Department is conducting a 1998 damage assessment of all Federal Aid System (FAS) roads, county roads and township roads.

The Ramsey County Commission issued an emergency declaration on April 7.

Benson County Emergency Management/Highway Department

Area meetings are being held to address flooding problems. The Benson County Highway Department is trying to fix as many roads as they can to maintain a safe road system. The Woods-Rutten and Brinsmade East Roads have been closed because of safety concerns. The Brinsmade East Road bridge presently has 10 inches of water over the bridge.

N.D. Department of Agriculture

Funding is still available for landowners in the Devils Lake Basin to participate in the State Waterbank Program. The Waterbank program provides landowners with 10-year leases for setting aside wetlands and adjacent uplands. Approximately \$300,000 is currently available for Waterbank leases. The money was appropriated by the State Legislature. The Waterbank leases require three acres of adjacent upland for every acre of wetlands or restorable wetlands.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: The next State Flood Coordination Center meeting is scheduled for 1:30 p.m., May 14, 1998, at the Ramsey County Courthouse basement meeting room.

Other web site addresses for flood recovery information include:

N.D. Division of Emergency Management: <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>
N.D. League of Cities: <http://www.ndlc.org>
N.D. State Water Commission: <http://water.swc.state.nd.us>
N.D. Attorney General Office: <http://www.state.nd.us/ndag>
N.D. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.state.nd.us/agr/>
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: <http://www.ncs-wc.usace.army.mil>
U.S. Geological Survey: <http://srv1dndbmk.cr.usgs.gov/public/index.html>

